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GENERAL NEWS

A 27

Freed Americans Enter Pa. Hospital

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By Lee Linder
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 14

An energetic young woman showing little signs of her ordeal, and an Army civilian employee expressed wonderment today at U.S. technological advances during their imprisonment by the Chinese Communists.

"Have you put any men on the moon yet?" Mary Ann Harbert asked during the 27-hour, 10,000-mile flight that brought her and Richard C. Fecteau to the United States following their release Monday in Hong Kong by the Chinese Reds.

"I told her yes," said Col. Leonard W. Johnson Jr., commander of the 9th Aeromedical Evacuation Group in Hong Kong at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. He described the American space program that has put eight men on the moon.

Johnson, who accompanied them halfway around the world, said Miss Harbert told him "I really don't know, I hadn't heard about it. Many people in China don't know that. The last thing we knew about space was that Russia had something circling the moon."

Happy to be back in the

United States, the two Americans checked into the Valley Forge Military Hospital, about 20 miles northwest of here, then fell exhausted into their first sleep in freedom. "I feel great," said Miss Harbert, 25, of Menlo Park, Calif., who came home in time for a Christmas time birthday celebration. She had been held nearly four years following her capture on a yacht off the mainland in 1968. "It was a fine trip and I'm glad to be home," she said.

Fecteau, of Lynn, Mass., said he was "very happy" after alighting from a helicopter on the grounds of the hospital.

Doctors, delaying a physical examination until Wednesday, said the two were tired but were "in very good physical condition."

Johnson said it was not known how long the two would remain at the hospital but that Miss Harbert probably would be released first.

"Fecteau will stay some time," Johnson said of the 43-year-old Army civilian employee who along with John T. Downey, 41, of New Britain, Conn., was aboard a plane shot down on a flight from Japan to Korea in 1952 during the Korean War.

Miss Harbert, who will celebrate her 25th birthday two

days after Christmas, was captured while sailing in Chinese waters north of Hong Kong on April 21, 1968.

The Chinese announced in releasing Miss Harbert that her yachting companion, Gerald Ross McLaughlin, committed suicide on March 7, 1969.

Johnson said during the stopover at Honolulu that Miss Harbert learned through a newspaper story of McLaughlin's death. He said she made no comment.

Miss Harbert and Fecteau arrived at the hospital at 5:40 a.m. after a short helicopter flight from McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., their first mainland U.S. stop after boarding a U.S. Air Force C-141 at Hong Kong.

Newsmen were not permitted to talk to them, although one reporter managed to get close enough to exchange a few words.

Johnson and Alan Romberg, a State Department official, said the pair had requested that newsmen not be permitted to question them.

They said there were no plans to debrief them and that they could speak to the press anytime they liked.

"But," Johnson said, "it will be a long time, if ever, for Fecteau to speak to the

press. He doesn't even want to talk to his family right now. He has developed a mechanism to handle his surroundings after being shut away for 19 years, coming out into a different culture.

"I think he'll be here a while getting adjusted," Johnson said, adding, "Fecteau has spent a lot of time in solitary confinement.

"I think it is going to take time for him to accept people as friends. Someone mentioned to him that his brother wants to see him and he questioned whether that might be some sort of trick."

He described Fecteau as withdrawn and cautious.

Johnson said Miss Harbert was lively and outgoing. He said the young woman, who spoke by phone with her parents upon her arrival at the hospital and then later posed for pictures, "will be much more willing to talk and much sooner" than Fecteau. Johnson said Fecteau spoke little of his imprisonment.

"He told me he spent a lot of time alone. He mentioned small walls and very small windows. He told me, 'Where I was I didn't get a chance to see much sky at all.'

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